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Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict

Statement by the Chairman addressed to the leadership of the Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Puligal and its military wing, the Karuna faction

At the 8th meeting of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, held on 10 May 2007 in connection with the consideration of the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Sri Lanka (S/2006/1006), the Chairman made the following statement on behalf of the Working Group:

The Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict

1. *Strongly condemns* the recent recruitment and use of child soldiers and all other violations and abuses committed against children by the Karuna faction;

2. *Urges* the Karuna faction:

(a) To immediately end the practice of abduction, use and recruitment of children under the age of 18, consistent with the commitment it made to the Special Representative and her Special Adviser;

(b) To engage with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), as a matter of priority, to release all children among its ranks, ensure a transparent verification process, including access to Karuna faction military camps, devise age-verification procedures with UNICEF and prevent further unlawful recruitment;

(c) To recognize and commit to maintaining the neutrality and security of schools, hospitals and religious institutions as safe zones in conflict-affected areas;

(d) To immediately provide humanitarian actors with unimpeded and safe access to all areas under its control.

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